

Tourism Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

"Draft – Subject to Board Approval"

Date: Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Location: ESD Offices, 633 3rd Ave, New York, NY

Attendance:

TAC Members

Cristyne Nicholas, Elinor Tatum

Phone: Thurman Thomas, Dan Fuller, Tom Mulroy, Alexandra Stanton, Allie Sirota, Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel

ESD / NYS Staff

Ross Levi, Executive Director of Tourism; Anna Pakman, VP Digital Marketing; Markly Wilson, Director of International Operations; Lisa Soto, Director of Public Relations & Licensing; Shenique Coston, Vice President, Experiential Marketing; Sara Emmert, Director of Tourism Policy Initiatives; Heather McElhiney, Director of Tourism Programs & Operations; Richard Gagliano, SVP of Marketing; Adam Kilduf, Assistant Press Secretary & Digital Production Specialist

TAC Guests

Deborah Hughes, Susan B. Anthony House; Nicole Mahoney, Break the Ice Media; Valerie Knoblauch, Visit Finger Lakes; Christopher Guidone, Big Picture Tourism; Ralph Tragale, Port Authority of New York/New Jersey; Roni Weiss, Travel Unity; Tamara Murray, Emerson Resort; Matt Steen, Emerson Resort; Greg DeLuca, Visit Rochester; Phil Ballman, Queens Borough Partnership; Sarah Lu, Epoch Times

Phone: Tom Martinelli, New York by Rail; Sarah McGinnis, Catskill Interpretive Center; Kristen Jarnagin, Long Island; Kristen Hanifin, Lake George; Samantha Hayes, Cattaraugus County; George Ntim, Marriot Hotels

Meeting called to order: 11:04 AM

I. Approval of minutes – Cristyne Nicholas

- Motion to approve by Elinor Tatum
- Minutes approved with a second by Tom Mulroy

II. Chair's Report – Cristyne Nicholas

- Welcome, everyone. We originally planned to hold this meeting in Albany to coincide with Tourism Action Day.
- This year, there is no single Tourism Action Day as the industry has opted for a different approach to its governmental advocacy, which I will be covering in my report. So thank you for your flexibility and joining us here.
- We'll start today with an update on the Governor's proposed FY 2021 Executive Budget, as well as advocacy work by the industry, followed by the I LOVE NY report.
- We'll then hear from two guest speakers, Nicole Mahoney whose organization Break the Ice Media works with TPAs in the Finger Lakes region & Deborah Hughes who heads the National Susan B. Anthony Museum & Home. They will be updating us on tourism activities in the Finger Lakes, as well as the plans and promotions surrounding this year's 100th Anniversary of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote and Susan B. Anthony's 200th birthday.

A. 2020 / 2021 Executive Budget

- During the last meeting, we reviewed all the tourism related announcements from the State of the State Address. Since then, the governor has laid out his budget proposal for the year.
- To date, what has been proposed includes:
 - \$57.5 million for the NYS tourism campaign, which is level with the proposed amount in last year's Executive Budget. This includes \$15 million for the 10th round in competitive funding through Market NY and \$3.815 million for the Tourism Promotion Matching Funds program.
 - New York Power Authority (NYPA) Board of Trustees has approved & authorized the \$300 million proposed for the Reimagine the Canals Initiative over a five-year funding plan. Additionally, the NYPA board has approved an initial \$30M for projects taking place in 2020. Those include:
 - A project that will connect SUNY College at Brockport to the Empire State Trail and the village of Brockport through a pedestrian bridge and overlook;
 - Interactive, hydro-powered illumination of Canal "movable dams" - initially in Amsterdam and Canajoharie in the Mohawk Valley - to celebrate the Canal's heritage and history;
 - The development of a canalside pocket neighborhood in Madison County demonstrating a model for 21st century canalside living;
 - A new whitewater destination, at the north end of Cayuga Lake near Seneca Falls, to increase eco-tourism and sport visitors to the region; and

- Development of hospitality & recreation destination at Guy Park Manor with a pedestrian bridge constructed across a canal lock to provide access to the Empire State Trail on the opposite side of the river.
- A record \$300 million was proposed again for the renewal of the Environmental Protection Fund, which is the highest sustained level of funding in the program's 25-year history. EPF appropriations include funding that would impact the tourism industry with \$89 million for parks and recreation, \$152 million for open space programs and \$20 million for the climate change mitigation and adaptation program, which includes funding to mitigate overuse of protected lands, as a result of record-breaking levels of visitation in some areas of the state.

B. Tourism Industry Advocacy

- Formerly known as Tourism Action Day, this day was organized to bring dozens of tourism stakeholders to Albany to meet with the legislature and advocate for funding and other needs.
- This year, the industry is trying a new strategy to advocate with elected officials.
- Instead of hosting just one formal lobby day, statewide tourism organizations are utilizing different avenues to discuss specific tourism-related needs with elected officials. Some are doing Albany-based meetings, either together or on their own.
- For example, today NYSHTA is meeting in Albany with representatives from groups like NYSTIA, NYS DMOs, CONY, SANY and the Business Council
- Other groups are providing their member organizations with information on statewide tourism issues that will allow advocates to seek out their representatives on their own.
- While many of the issues that are being discussed overlap, tourism stakeholders are using this strategy as an opportunity to discuss the topics that are most relevant to their work.
- Some of these issues include:
 - Supporting an increase to the Tourism Matching Grants Program
 - Supporting the governor's budget for the I LOVE NY Program
 - Supporting legislation addressing concerns regarding unregulated short-term rentals outside of NYC
 - Supporting the creation of Tourism Improvement Districts, for counties / cities with one million or more people
 - Opposing legislation to begin the school year before Sept, which would impact the tourism industry workforce
 - And supporting legislation that protects organizations from ADA website litigation by setting an appropriate web standard for people with accessibility issues
- Finally, I would like to mention that earlier this week Governor Cuomo announced a \$20 million Airport Capital Grant Program for airports across New York State to support safety improvements, modernize operations and increase general and business-related aviation capacity.
- This funding is in addition to the \$200 million Governor Cuomo made available through the Upstate Airport Economic Development and Revitalization competition that supports projects aimed at improving the customer experience and expanding terminal facilities in six airports across upstate NY.

III. I LOVE NY Report – Ross Levi

A. Free Snowmobiling weekend

- Two weekends ago, on February 16 at the Hotel Saranac in Saranac Lake, I attended a governor's press conference announcing a free snowmobiling weekend for all out-of-state and Canadian snowmobilers
- On March 14 & 15 all registration fees will be waived for out-of-state snowmobilers to enjoy over 10,000 miles of the best snowmobiling trails in the nation
- In conjunction with this announcement, I LOVE NY launched digital and social media campaign to attract snowmobile enthusiasts and supports the overall \$4 million winter tourism campaign currently underway, which features snowmobiling and a wide array of winter activities in television, print and digital advertising, public relations and social media initiatives, and other promotional efforts
- He also announced \$4.2 Million to be awarded to local governments for trail maintenance and grooming statewide
- The program is funded by snowmobile registration fees collected by the State Department of Motor Vehicles and deposited into the Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Fund.
- County and municipal governments will distribute the grants to about 230 snowmobile clubs across the state, which in turn will groom and maintain the trails.
- On this next slide, is the 30-second digital ad that will be running through the free snowmobiling weekend

Video presentation

B. ADK Promotional efforts

- Since our last meeting, we partnered with ORDA to support the Empire State Winter Games, Jan 30 - Feb 2
- The Games are a multi-day sports event that brings over 2,100 athletes of all ages from across the state and beyond, including 15 states and 3 countries, to compete in over 30 winter sports events in Lake Placid

- The Games celebrated its 40th anniversary and featured a push para bobsled event and collegiate ski jumping
- I LOVE NY activated at Olympic Conference Center during athlete registration with bobsled GIF selfies and consumer engagement and we were able to collect 335 emails at the event

C. Adirondacks Winter Press Fam: February 6 – 9

- 2020 is the 40th anniversary of the “Miracle on Ice,” which was the inspiration for a press FAM trip to Lake Placid
- Travel writers from Trip Savvy, InsideHook and Family Vacation Critic spent a weekend exploring Lake Placid
- Stayed at Whiteface Lodge, rode the new gondola, the bobsled, and also visited a maple farm
- Article published on InsideHook on February 20th and more coverage is expected

D. Trade Shows

- The NYTimes Travel Show was held on January 24 through the 26 at the Javits Center
 - I LOVE NY was an official Bronze Sponsor which provided the opportunity to have 25 contiguous partner booths anchored together by I LOVE NY branding and we had 21 separate tourism partners
 - Also had brand ambassadors working the aisle, ‘going mobile’ as compared to last week when they were in a booth, which allowed them to serve as a kind of welcome concierge for the aisle
 - A total of 34,015 consumers, travel trade professionals and media attended the show and we had over 960 unique visitors complete the Travel Buddy quiz being administered by the brand ambassadors
 - I conducted interviews with a number of travel journalists on Friday
 - This year was the first time we partnered with the LGBTQ Pavilion at the Travel show
 - This gave us the opportunity to activate in the exit area of the LGBTQ pavilion with brand ambassadors directing consumers to learn more about NYS in the aisle
 - We also hosted a trivia show called “So You Think You Know NYS” that was designed to engage LGBTQ travelers to think about NYS as a vacation destination while trying to win ILNY LGBTQ giveaway items
 - As a result we collected over 3,000 emails and networked with other organizations at the pavilion
- Markly led to NYS delegation at Holiday World Show, Ireland’s largest and best attended annual public exhibition with 696 exhibitors from dozens of cities and countries from all over the world
 - 1,200 trade in attendance for a total of 77,850 trade + public
 - Dutchess and Orange counties also attended

E. Research and Industry Education

- At the Division of Tourism, we are working on updating our visitor profile for New York State.
 - Our local partners rely on the Division of Tourism for data, and it’s an important role we serve
 - This visitor profile, which hasn’t been updated in a few years now, assists our department in marketing and sales efforts, as well as providing critical information to our TPAs, DMOs and industry partners.
 - We’ve selected a vendor to conduct research and produce a visitor profile in late spring of this year.
 - It will include demographic data on domestic visitors for 2019, broken down by the 11 vacation regions
 - This profile will inform what type of traveler comes to NYS from length of stay to where they came from and includes new data sets for accessibility and special interest activities like outdoor recreation and eco-tourism
 - Once this information is compiled, we will be releasing to our partners and updating everyone in the coming months so stay tuned for more on that.
- This year the Division is working on stepping up efforts to bring knowledge and skills building opportunities to the state’s tourism industry
 - With the introduction of new programs and research, we’ve identified the need to engage the industry on a regularized basis to provide updates and share information on the work being done by staff who work on tourism efforts, as well as bring information on domestic and international tourism trends and best practices
 - Right now, we are working on the creation of a bi-monthly schedule of information sharing and skills building opportunities led by the I LOVE NY team
 - One of the first sessions is in the works for late March and will be about reaching new audiences. We hope to present results from our senior travel and accessibility research projects, discuss the new Gender Expression Non-Discrimination and what it means for the tourism industry, and have our international reps discuss the current environment around reaching guests from other countries.

F. Interagency Taskforce

- We held our third interagency taskforce meeting on February 6 in Albany
- 17 state agencies, as well as a rep from the office of Senator Jose Serrano, Chair of the Senate Tourism Committee, attended the meeting
- We were able to recap work by the Division of Tourism since the last meeting in September as well as review proposed tourism-related programs for 2020
- Other agencies were able to report on the work they have done that involves visitation to New York State With large multi-agency projects such as Reimagine the Canals, finalizing the Empire State Trail, extension of the

State Fair, improvements to airports and historic anniversaries, these meetings provide a good way to keep all state agencies updated on tourism-related work and provide opportunities for brainstorming and collaboration

IV. Guest Speakers: 100th Anniversary of 19th Amendment – Nicole Mahoney Susan B. Anthony's 200th Birthday – Deborah L. Hughes

A. Nicole Mahoney – 100th Anniversary 19th Amendment

- Why the Finger Lakes? Celebrate 100th in the birthplace of Women's Suffrage in the Finger Lakes
 - In 1848, when the 1st Women's Rights Convention was held in Seneca Falls, it kicked off movement with Elizabeth Cady Stanton as well as Susan B. Anthony and many others who lived in the area at the time, they all convened there in 1848.
 - In 1872, Susan B. Anthony was arrested for voting in the Presidential election. In the parlor of her home in Rochester, NY. They weren't able to try her in Rochester, NY, where she voted, they had to take her to Canandaigua, NY which is Ontario county, nearby, for her trial.
- We also have Harriet Tubman, located in Auburn, NY and was very active in the Civil Rights Movement.
 - In 1917 women won the right to vote in New York State, this is Celebrate 100 because the 19th Amendment was adopted as part of the US Constitution, granting the right to vote to all US women over 21.
- What are we going to do about the 100th Year? As the 14 county TPA organization, how can we bring this anniversary to all 14 counties?
 - Every county has empowered women, female business owners, female creators.
 - Campaign morphed from empowered women across 14 county vacation regions.
 - Women created, women focused, women empowered.
- 100 Ways to Celebrate Women Empowerment
 - Unites region under one mission to empower female leaders past and present.
 - Addressing the trends of meaningful transformative travel and curated experiences, the list educates tourists on their foremothers and the Finger Lakes region current day abundance of women run enterprises.
 - Themes
 - Historical Stops
 - Women-led Workshops
 - Female Foodies
 - Empowered Overnights
 - Women and Craft Beverages
 - Artfully Focused (art, music, culture)
 - Women in Education
 - Adventurous and Entrepreneurs
- Campaign Logo created by local female graphic designer
- Website landing page for Celebrate 100 created.
 - Highlighted Empowered Overnights
 - Digital Women's History Trail to encourage exploration across entire region
- NY Times Travel Show booth highlighted Finger Lakes and Celebrate 100
- Collateral Supplied
- Public Relations
 - PR agency pitched angles across variety of interests:
 - Where to celebrate Women's History Month
 - Solo travel for the empowered woman
 - Woman Blazing Trails in Food and Wine
 - Must Book Girlfriend's Get-a-ways
 - Region attended deskside appointments with
 - Travel and Leisure
 - Fodor's Travel
 - Conde Nast Traveler
 - Top Media placements:
 - New York Times: Where to Celebrate Women's Rights this year
 - Bloomberg: Where to go in 2020
 - Lonely Planet: Where to celebrate the Centennial of Women's Suffrage in the US
 - Travel & Leisure: The Finger Lakes Region is the Underrated Women's History Destination You Need to Visit

- The Boston Globe: Tourism industry is (finally) shining a light on the women of the world
- AFAR: Where to go in 2020
- Total Campaign impressions to date: 53,893,570
- Regional Collaborations & Events
 - 5 counties within region are doing a paid campaign – Where Brave Woman Winter
- Target Audience: Women 25 – 45 living in the metro areas (Boston, Philadelphia & NYC) within a five-hour drive to the Finger Lakes region.
 - Microsite: www.bravewomenflx.com
 - Funnel visitors through microsite to explore the stones and historic landmarks throughout the Finger Lakes region of NYS, search for participating hotels and businesses, and plan a trip to the region.
 - Social Media Hashtags: #bravewomenflx #wherebravewomenwinter
 - Collaborative effort: Cayuga, Ontario, Seneca, Monroe, and Onondaga counties
- Looking to make this a year-round campaign
- Harriet Tubman Weekend Auburn NY March 6 – 8, 2020
 - Citywide celebration hosted by NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center and throughout Auburn's historic and cultural sites, honoring Tubman's life and legacy
- Rochester celebrates Susan B. Anthony's 200th birthday and the anniversary of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution with a variety of events to celebrate:
 - What is Women's Suffrage: Postcard exhibit at Memorial Art Gallery
 - History of Photography Exhibition: relevant pictures documents & stories at George Eastman Museum
 - The Change Makers Exhibit: to explore the remarkable women who called Rochester and the Finger Lakes home at Rochester Museum, & Science Center
- Chemung County Celebrates
 - National Soaring Museum will present an exhibit dedicated to American women who have contributed significantly to the sport of soaring
 - The Chemung Valley History Museum has opened an exhibit on Chemung county and Women's Suffrage

B. Deborah Hughes, Susan B. Anthony's 200th Birthday

- Started planning in 2009 with all partners across the Finger Lakes region
- In 2017, when ILNY did the campaign celebrating New York's equal rights history, which was also the 100th anniversary of the passage of suffrage in NYS, we experienced a significant increase in visitation. On a good day, we were doing 10 tours, about 150 visitors in a 5 hours day
- Our goal in the last two strategic plans has been to really think about how to take Susan B. Anthony's brand, which is internationally recognized, and leverage it for tourism to benefit the region. That's what our focus has been. Susan B. Anthony is as relevant as she was 10 years ago. What we know is a lot of people know very little about the actual history, but are very emotionally connected to it. We had 30 people fly in from out of town to be at her 200th birthday celebration. We have never had an out of state draw for people to come here
- In Rochester, we are particularly focusing on the connection between Susan B. Anthony and Rochester and getting visitors to resonate the destination with Anthony's life and history.
- This is our 75th anniversary as a museum although we got our charter in 2012. We started in 1945 when it was the 25th anniversary of suffrage. We were organized, and we were all volunteer from 1945 to 1992. The Anthony Museum is one of the oldest historic sites celebrating women's history. Only 10% of national landmarks are directly related to women's history, so we really are a premiere location. There's the national suffrage commission that will be coming to Seneca Falls for convention days, they're doing a lot of promoting there. Senator Gillibrand is one of the representatives and there are three other people from New York State that are a part of that.
- When the ILNY equal rights commercial aired in 2017, the Anthony Museum was overwhelmed with visitors who said things like "We've always wanted to come, we saw the commercial." It was clearly a driver for people coming from states like Vermont, Pennsylvania and Ohio.
- Rochester has its own brand related to Susan B. Anthony, which include events, connections from arts and cultural organizations around the city, as well as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra's opera about Anthony.
- New York is featured at a float in the Rose Bowl parade. 100 women marched behind the float and represented the Anthony Museum, which 23 million viewers watched on TV. National women's Hall of Fame and the Anthony Museum were part of the partnership and a local group did the float. They won the theme for the day.
- In the Rose parade was Mimi Aung, who is lead at Jet Propulsion Laboratory creating Rover helicopter for the Mar's project from NASA, Delores Huerta who's a labor activist and Emily Jones retired chemist from Kodak
- Votes for women history trail was established by Congress, which establishes a crescent from Rochester to Fayetteville and includes all the key sites. It was passed in 2009 but they've never received an appropriation. We need to continue to advocate for federal funding to do the development because this helps really reach international audiences.

- National Parks Service features women's history in all their sites as well as the women's right park side as well.
- In 2017, we took 30 reenactors, particularly a very diverse group of reenactors because people tend to think of middle-class white women in white suits and that's not the suffrage movement, it's not how it started. It started as a radical social reform movement with evolutionists in New York State. We had that visible reputation. We spent 5 days floating on the canal from Seneca Falls back to Rochester.
- For 2020, we intentionally said, "Let's put a bunch of things happening, during summer tourism season that involve our partners and scatter them out, which became the concept behind VoterCade.
- VoterCade 2020 is a series of single-day events and is planned for diverse, multi-generational audiences.
- The objective is to highlight the importance of voting rights and civic discourse to celebrate the ways Anthony's work is still relevant today.
- We also have a 2020 quilt project where people from around the country have made 20-by 20-inch squares and tied them together. We have 325 different squares which have become public art. The long-term project is that this will go to schools and libraries in small pieces to do study on our regional history and our connection.
- People don't realize that Suffrage History connects with so many different things. You probably didn't know that the Take Me Out to the Ball Game sign was inspired by a Suffragist? When you talk about suffrage history, you're talking about transportation, you're talking about the railroad industry, you're talking about almost anything that has a huge following of people who are deeply interested that connects with this history.
- Beyond 2020, I believe we will continue to leverage audiences that connect with aspects of this history and this story.
- In 2016, we had 10,000 people come to put their "I voted today" stickers on Anthony's gravestone, and 23 million people watched John Kutchko's livestream on Facebook. It was more of a social media opportunity than a tourism opportunity, but we need to convert every single social media opportunity to an opportunity to reach more audiences to convince them to visit Rochester and the museum. You couldn't come in 2020, make it next year or make it the year after that.
- Susan B. Anthony and Queen Victoria were the two most famous women in 1900, she organized three international conventions, so she has an international connection, which people still resonate with. The countries where girls and women still don't have access to education and equal rights, Anthony remains a big draw.
- Every time that the news focuses on women's issues, it's an opportunity for us to tie in and say, "Come here where it all got started and where it's really happening and visit the real parlor where Susan B. Anthony was arrested for voting in 1872."
- We believe that Susan B. Anthony is as relevant today as she was 20 years ago.
- We are incredibly grateful to Visit Rochester and the promotion that they're doing. We're getting great international exposure. When the New York Times says you're one of the top sites to visit, we're pretty excited about it.
- Thank you to all of you for doing what you're doing. Come visit us!

V. New Business

- **CHAIR NICHOLAS:** Rich, I want to congratulate you on your new position and I know you are still getting your feet wet, but I'm hoping that at the next TAC meeting we could do a bit of a deep dive on the advertising and where we've been over the last few years and where we should go. My sense is that it could use maybe a refresh. Especially in light of the current situation with international travel being impacted by coronavirus, after 9/11 when we had that tragedy, ILNY played a really crucial role in pushing our advertising to a more local market. We did a lot of different commercials and worked with NYC & Company. NYC & Company was able to do a commercial for the first time ever with the help of grants with ILNY.
- **MR. GAGLIANO:** That's perfect timing because I'm still working on looking at past commercials and taking a look at where we are going forward. Instead of completely starting a new strategy from scratch, we know what works and what doesn't work and how do we evolve it based on the current needs.
- **MR. LEVI:** And we have some really good data on what the performance of the commercials has been over the years.

Thank you all for your time. Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5th. Please keep an eye out for further information on that meeting.

Meeting adjourned: 12:19pm

Next meeting: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 11:00 AM in New York, NY